

Richland Soil & Water Conservation District Newsletter

July 2006

803-576-2080



South Carolina Institute for Natural Resources at Lander University



Chelsea Connor, Richland County's 2006 SCINR scholarship recipient winner tells us she had a great time at Lander University. The 24 high school students enrolled in the week long institute were sponsored by 16 Soil and Water Conservation Districts. Chelsea studied programs that focused on water quality, boating safety, wildlife and wildlife management, soil composition, geology and even got to pan for gold. Chelsea had a blast, made new friends and received a college credit. Our Conservation District sends a delegate to this Institute each year. If you know of a student or teacher who might be interested, please contact t Mary Jane Henderson at 803-576-2080.

What Is A Soil and Water Conservation District?

State law created soil and water conservation districts to provide grass roots leadership for development and implementation of conservation activities. In South Carolina, conservation district boundaries are the same as county boundaries. A conservation district is a subdivision of state government.

The purposes of a conservation district are:

- To be responsible to the citizens of the district in matters involving resource conservation.
- To promote the wise and responsible use of natural resources.
- To develop and implement programs to protect and conserve soil, water, farmland, woodland, wildlife, energy, and riparian and wetland resources.

Conservation Districts work with other districts and/or agencies with conservation interest and expertise to meet conservation needs. This includes developing programs, determining funding needs and finding a source of funds to meet these needs.

Conservation Districts in South Carolina have a governing board of five members known as Conservation District Commissioners. Two are appointed by the SC Dept. of Natural Resources upon recommendation from each respective conservation district board and three are elected on a nonpartisan ballot in the general election.



Commissioners are Front Row – L-R: John V. Green, Chair, and Lewis Gunter, Vice-Chair
Back Row - L-R: Kenneth Mullis, Sec/Treas, Hemphill Pride, III and Heath Hill

(The Beaver *Castor canadensis*) Friend or Foe??



This beaver dam, located on a channel of the Eastover Stormwater Drainage Project, helps protect ponds below by trapping sediment.

Beavers are more than intriguing animals with flat tails and lustrous fur. American Indians called the beaver the "sacred center" of the land because this species creates rich habitats for other mammals, fish, turtles, frogs, birds and ducks. Since beavers prefer to dam streams in shallow valleys, much of the flooded area becomes wetlands. Such wetlands are cradles of life with biodiversity that can rival tropical rain forests. Almost half of endangered and threatened species in North America rely upon wetlands.

Besides being a keystone species, beavers reliably and economically maintain wetlands that can sponge up floodwaters, prevent erosion, raise the water table and act as the "earth's kidneys" to purify water. The latter occurs because silt collects upstream of older beaver dams, and toxics, such as pesticides, are broken down in the wetlands that beavers create. Thus, water downstream of dams is cleaner and requires less treatment.

Although beavers produce suitable habitat for many wildlife species, they can also conflict directly with the economic interests of man. The damage to timber or agricultural crops (such as soybeans and corn) from cutting or flooding can be extensive.

July 7, 2006

To: The citizens of Richland County who own or operate land in rural areas

Subject: Soil and water conservation help

All technical soil and water conservation service to rural Richland County now comes from Lexington, not St. Matthews.

If you need help or advice conserving your soil, water, plants, or wildlife, call me at (803) 359-3165, Ext.3. If this call is long distance, you may call the Richland Soil and Water Conservation District at 576-2080, and someone will take your message and forward it to me.

For any business you do with the Farm Service Agency (FSA), you need to continue doing that in St. Matthews.

Sincerely,

Doug Deaderick
District Conservationist



The Richland Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioners approved the following priority order of Natural Resource Concerns for NRCS's Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) for Richland County in 2006:

1. Soil Health – Low organic matter in Coastal Plain soils. Increased **cover crop** incentives encourage either aerial seeding or no-till drilling small grain following cotton, peanuts, soybeans. This winter **cover crop** must be killed (not harvested) for planting no-till crops the following spring. This **cover crop** practice alone has the potential to cause a dramatic increase in organic matter levels in the Coastal Plain, thereby improving tilth and increasing yields.



2. At-Risk Species Habitat (Quail) – A combination of **prescribed burning** to remove woody underbrush in pine forests, **rotational disking** in open fields, native grass and weed **field borders**, and **hedgerow plantings** in large open fields to provide nesting and brood-rearing cover.



3. Surface Water Health – Excluding livestock from streams/ponds with a **fence**.



4. Water Supply – Wells, pipelines, troughs, heavy use area protection (geotextile and gravel pad) to supply water to livestock fenced out of streams under *Surface Water Health* above.



5. Grazing Lands Health – Excessive soil erosion on pastureland solved with **critical area planting, pasture planting, cross fence.**



USDA-NRCS Technical Service Provided for Conservation of Natural Resources



Doug Deaderick (right), District Conservationist with Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), discusses an application for the NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) with Ms. Donna Johnson on the pasture lands of Camp Discovery near Blythewood. The EQIP program provides cost sharing incentives for water quality improvement by establishing fences along the creek to keep cattle out of the stream and cross-fencing to provide better pasture management

Affiliate Members are a vital part of our conservation team. Without the monetary support given from Affiliates, we would not be able to carry out the many programs to promote "Conservation Stewardship" within the county. The Conservation District is committed to helping educate the students and landowners of Richland County. Become an affiliate member by sending this slip to:

**Richland Conservation District
2020 Hampton Street, Room 3063A
Columbia, SC 29204**

I would like to become an Individual/Corporate sponsor of The Richland Conservation District

<input type="checkbox"/> Affiliate Member	\$25
<input type="checkbox"/> Contributing Affiliate Member	\$50
<input type="checkbox"/> Sponsoring Affiliate Member	\$75
<input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining Affiliate Member	\$100
<input type="checkbox"/> Contributing Corporate Member	\$100-490
<input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining Corporate Member	\$1000-5000

Name_____

Address_____

City, St., Zip_____

Your contribution is tax deductible

Richland Conservation District

Commissioners

John V. Green, Chairman
Lewis Gunter, Vice Chairman
Kenneth Mullis, Sec./Treasurer
Heath Hill
Hemphill Pride, III
Rev. Cathy Jamieson-Ogg, Chaplain

District Staff

Hugh Caldwell, District Manager
Charlie Fisher, Administrative Assistant
Mary Jane Henderson, Education Coordinator
Doug Deaderick, District Conservationist, Agriculture, NRCS
Ricky Walker, Civil Engineer Tech. NRCS, Ft. Jackson
Joy Sullivan, Program Coordinator, DNR

PLEASE NOTE

The Richland Conservation District Commissioner's Board Meeting will be the second Monday of each month at Lizard's Thicket, 402 Beltline Blvd., Columbia, SC. Each meeting begins at 6:30 PM. The public is cordially invited to attend. For information call 803-576-2080 or email charliefisher@richlandonline.com.

The USDA prohibits discrimination in its programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age and disability.